

St. Maries Joint School District No. 41: **Case Study**



IDAS™ Digital Radios Keep Rural Idaho School District Connected



A case study prepared by Icom America, manufacturers of high-performance, award-winning radios for over 60 years.

St. Maries Joint School District No. 41

IDAS™ Technology Improves School District's Communications



ST. MARIES
JOINT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 41

**IDAS**™

Featured Product:

- Portable: F2100D Series



Timing is everything, right? This story's moral isn't just about providing a secure solution to a school district's aging radio system. It's also about being prepared.

St. Maries, Idaho, is a peaceful, rural place where the timber industry reigns. TriPeaks LLC, a family-owned, local radio and electronics shop, keeps the local loggers and schools outfitted with quality radios.

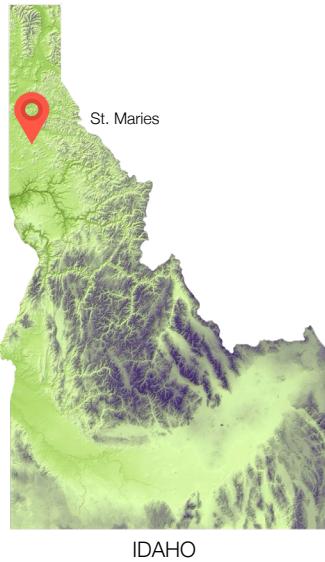
Early one day in January 2021, a windstorm roared through the area, knocking out power to a reported 4,727 customers. Trees were uprooted, and power lines were down for days. In front of Heyburn Elementary, the top of a tree snapped off and landed in the eastbound lane of Idaho State Highway 5, blocking traffic. Another toppled at the nearby middle school on the opposite side of the courtyard, taking down a power line.

Had this windstorm happened months earlier, the administrators at St. Maries Joint School District No. 41 would have a different story to tell.

Prioritizing Security

St. Maries Joint School District No. 41 educates almost a thousand young minds across four different schools: Heyburn Elementary, UpRiver Elementary, St. Maries Middle School, and St. Maries High School. The district's previous radio communications system, made up of various makes and models of maturing radios, was outdated and barely met modern-day security standards.

These radios were used around the clock by the district's principals, secretaries, and other administrators, before-school and after-school bus-loading, during recess, within the offices, and roundtrip bus rides to sporting events. A crucial motivation for the security boost was student privacy. Because the previous system wasn't digital, a call could be picked up by anyone with a scanner, which meant administrators could never use any names.



“...because we had parents that were picking up their kids throughout the day, we were able to call kids by name from the buildings to facilitate a quick and efficient dismissal without concern for a breach of security.”

The district received money from the Education Stabilization Fund through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act for the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER Fund). After discovering that purchasing new, secure radios was an acceptable use of the federal funds, the district was approved to upgrade. One of the school's principals reached out to TriPeaks for help with the next steps.

The Right Help at the Right Time

The team at TriPeaks got in touch with Icom's Land Mobile sales team, and decided that the district should switch to Icom's IDAS™ F2100DS UHF radios. These compact portable radios are waterproof, dustproof, and come with a powerful 1500 mW speaker. Whether you're outside the stadium or inside an office, the clarity is consistent. Most importantly, the security features include a digital voice scrambler for low-level encryption, keeping calls private.

Both concerns, needing digital that is *also* secure, were now addressed, and TriPeaks successfully installed the new system. TriPeaks programmed forty (40) F2100DS radios with Group and Individual IDs. No analog in sight.

No One Left in the Dark

January's wind storm left the entire area powerless. And powerless also means internet-less. Without the internet, the school district didn't have an operational phone system, either, as it was a VoIP system.

Especially stranded was UpRiver Elementary, a more-remote school. Alicia Holthouse, Superintendent of St. Maries Joint School District No. 41, described there being buses trapped by downed trees en route to schools. “Thankfully, we had just deployed the new radios. I could quickly and clearly communicate with the principals at every building... and UpRiver could communicate with us. I was able to monitor trapped buses as they made it to town. And because we had parents that were



picking up their kids throughout the day, we were able to call kids by name from the buildings to facilitate a quick and efficient dismissal without concern for a breach of security. The list goes on and on. I was so thankful to have the radios that day.” Holthouse said with relief.

By selecting a knowledgeable, authorized Icom dealer, the school district bundled versatility, durability, and digital security with the compact F2100DS portable radios, and successfully installed the new system. It is critical to be prepared, and even better, to be as prepared as possible with Icom.

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